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Viewing cable 10DHAKA87, BANGLADESH BACKS COPENHAGEN ACCORD AND LOOKS AHEAD

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- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
10DHAKA87	2010-01-27 09:06	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Dhaka

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.aftenposten.no/spesial/wikileaksdokumenter/article4008385.ece>

VZCZCXRO9105
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 0697
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY 0088
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON PRIORITY 2987
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 DHAKA 000087
SIPDIS
DEPT FOR SCA/FO, SCA/INSB, S/SECC
E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/27/2015
TAGS: [SENV](#) [ENRG](#) [KGHG](#) [BG](#)
SUBJECT: BANGLADESH BACKS COPENHAGEN ACCORD AND LOOKS AHEAD
REF: A. SECSTATE 3079
[1](#)B. 09 DHAKA 1096
[1](#)C. 09 DHAKA 942
Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d)
[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph 3.

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST

¶2. (C) Minister of Environment Dr. Hasan Mahmud told visiting PDAS Patrick Moon on January 21 that Bangladesh would join the Copenhagen Accord and that he was hopeful about further progress on climate change issues. (The Minister subsequently confirmed Bangladesh's accession to the Copenhagen Accord on January 26.) He praised President Obama's personal engagement in Copenhagen, and acknowledged that the Copenhagen Accord was a positive step towards greater international cooperation on climate change. Dr. Mahmud criticized China for opposing several constructive proposals at Copenhagen and trying to get Least Developed Countries (LDC) to support positions contrary to LDC interests. He commented that inadequate preparation and errors by conference organizers prevented the conference from achieving a more successful outcome. The Minister called for further consultations with U.S. negotiators and like-minded countries in order to lay the groundwork for greater progress at future climate change meetings.

¶3. (U) ACTION REQUEST: Post requests that S/SECC consider sending a representative to discuss climate change at the Bangladesh Development Forum on February 15-16.

BANGLADESH SUPPORTS COPENHAGEN ACCORD

¶4. (U) In a speech at Lund University on the day after the Copenhagen Summit ended, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called the Copenhagen Accord, a "reasonable conclusion" to the Summit. Though noting that much work remained to be done to implement the accord, she commented that the agreement took into account Bangladeshi interests and laid the groundwork for enhanced international cooperation on climate change issues.

¶5. (SBU) In a meeting with Minister of Environment and Forest Hasan Mahmud on January 21, SCA PDAS Moon followed up on Ref A demarche and expressed hope that Bangladesh would formally join the Copenhagen Accord. (Post earlier delivered Ref A talking points on January 13 to Dr. Mahmud and other GOB contacts.) Dr. Mahmud told PDAS Moon the cabinet would consider the issue at a meeting on January 24 and he predicted, "we should be able to sign" the accord after this meeting. (He subsequently confirmed to PolCouns on January 26 that Bangladesh had joined with the Copenhagen Accord.)

¶6. (SBU) Dr. Mahmud emphasized that he was quite impressed by President Obama's personal engagement in Copenhagen, noting that the President had worked tirelessly and "tried to do his best" to facilitate negotiations. PDAS Moon commented that although the outcome in Copenhagen was less than we wanted, it was nevertheless a significant achievement. Minister Mahmud agreed and suggested that there was increasing consensus on the future direction of climate change negotiations.

CRITICISM OF COPENHAGEN PROCESS

¶7. (C) Minister Mahmud faulted Copenhagen Summit organizers for poor preparation and management, notably the failure of the conference chair to formally mandate the smaller working group to negotiate a draft agreement for the conference. He commented that it was clear on the first day that some countries were blocking progress while others had little role in negotiations. He cited the example of some oil-exporting countries that may consider a climate change agreement to be contrary to their interests.

FRUSTRATION WITH CHINA'S ROLE

¶8. (C) Dr. Mahmud criticized Chinese negotiators in Copenhagen for opposing several constructive proposals including a European Union proposal to include EU mitigation commitments. He suggested the Chinese may have opposed mitigation commitments from Annex 1 countries because they

feared China would be pressured to make similar commitments when it became an Annex 1 country. Dr. Mahmud also noted that China was alone in opposing a proposal on a shared vision for climate change goals, but the Chinese negotiator had backed down when he saw that he was isolated. Mahmud criticized China for trying to unify Least Developing Countries to support negotiating positions contrary to LDC interests.

PREPARATION KEY TO FUTURE CLIMATE CHANGE MEETINGS

¶9. (C) In the aftermath of Copenhagen, Mahmud emphasized the importance of enhanced consultations with the U.S. and like-minded countries to better prepare for future climate change meetings. He warned that if nothing came out of the next Climate Change Summit there would be "total frustration." For this reason, he said, "we can't afford" to repeat the lack of planning that hindered parties from achieving a more successful outcome in Copenhagen. Dr. Mahmud expressed appreciation for past consultations with U.S. Special Envoy for Climate Change Todd Stern and called for continued informal engagement to prepare for the Bonn UNFCCC Convention in June.

ADAPTATION/MITIGATION FUNDING

¶10. (C) Dr. Mahmud argued that, as probably the country most vulnerable to climate change, Bangladesh should get its "fair share" of climate change adaptation funding. As discussions proceed over funding mechanisms, he said, Bangladesh wanted to ensure easy access for vulnerable countries. He criticized market-based financing mechanisms as "not accessible" and said that adaptation funding should come from governments. Since International Financial Institutions (IFI) have complicated funding procedures, he argued that a separate body should manage adaptation funds. Noting compromises proposed by Dutch and Danish negotiators, he suggested that negotiations may eventually produce a "hybrid" that combined a new oversight group with IFI management.

¶11. (C) Asked how Bangladesh would use adaptation funds, Dr. Mahmud commented that funding would not be sufficient to meet Bangladesh's vast needs, but he cited several priority areas for adaptation funding: construction of coastal embankments, river management (including dredging), and promotion of renewable energy (particularly solar and wind power).

REGIONAL COOPERATION ON WATER AND ENERGY

¶12. (C) PDAS Moon noted the Prime Minister's recent visit to India and asked Dr. Mahmud's views on regional cooperation on water and energy issues. The Minister stressed the importance of greater engagement with India on water management, noting that the countries shared 54 common rivers. He commented that Bangladesh could not prevent India from developing water and hydroelectric projects, so it needed to encourage India to address Bangladeshi concerns. He said that hydroelectric projects such as the controversial Tipaimukh Dam could actually benefit Bangladesh by regulating water flow. Although this project has become politically controversial, Dr. Mahmud pointed out that Bangladesh originally asked India to build the Tipaimukh Dam in 1988.

¶13. (C) Minister Mahmud underscored the high potential for increased regional cooperation on energy. He cited the example of Bhutan where an estimated 20,000 megawatts in potential hydroelectric capacity could be harnessed for energy exports to India and Bangladesh. Dr. Mahmud said that there was greater understanding of technical needs, but the main obstacle to greater energy cooperation was the "mental gap" or popular mistrust of regional cooperation in South Asia. He said the GOB was determined to show leadership on this issue and pursue regional energy cooperation regardless of political controversy. As a first step to develop energy cooperation with Bangladesh, India had agreed to develop a

250 MW project in Tripura.

COMMENT:

¶14. (C) Dr. Mahmud's comments underscore Bangladesh's constructive efforts to advance climate change negotiations. The GOB clearly appreciated the U.S. role in Copenhagen and recognized that, despite its shortcomings, the Copenhagen Accord was a significant and positive accomplishment. Post suggests that SECC consider sending a representative to discuss climate change at the Bangladesh Development Forum on February 15-16 and consult with GOB counterparts.
MORIARTY